

embers last night. The streets were filled with crowds of wet, hungry, homeless and despairing men, women and children, most of whom had lost loved ones and all their property. The water still flooded the streets and the sky was black with smoke from the burning refineries, cooper-shops, radiator works, hotels, furniture factories, freight depots and dwellings.

The big refinery and was plant owned by F. L. Wood & Co. caught fire exactly at noon, and the black smoke blowing directly over the city turned night almost into the blackness of midday. It was indescribably awful, and as the rain continued to come down in bucketfuls, what the outcome was to be was past even conjecture.

**FIRST FLOOD.**  
The dam at Sparta, seven miles above Titusville, burst under the flood pressure caused by the late heavy rains late on Saturday night, and very soon the swollen waters of Oil Creek were rushing through the streets in the lower part of the city with seemingly irresistible force, while from house to house windows and driftwood piles floated directly in the midst of the torrent came beseeching walls and screaming angels of distress from the helpless victims all imploring aid.

Brave men with boats and ropes battled manfully against the terrific current, and hundreds of captives were brought safely to land, while others perished.

**THEN THE FIRE.**  
Five persons, all males, were seen to perish while grasping a piece of timber. Just as the thousands of spectators who were looking on with bated breath, unable to render the slightest assistance, were led to believe that the sufferers would safely reach land, a neighboring tank of oil exploded in close proximity and in a moment the doomed men were enveloped in flames, and death came speedily to relieve their sufferings, their bodies being at once swallowed in raging, flaming floods.

Burning oil flowed out upon the surface of the creek, which was soon covered by the blaze from house to house.

It was 2 o'clock Sunday morning when the explosion occurred.  
The fire-bell of the tollers at the city water and electric light works had been quickly flooded at the start, thus throwing the city into almost total darkness and rendering the by-standers at once useless for fire purposes. Notwithstanding this state of affairs, the danger to the city was underrated, no one having the slightest idea that the ravages being made by the flood were to be quickly augmented by torrents of fire.

But suddenly a dull, heavy explosion was heard, and immediately a heavy stream of flame, 700 feet in height, pierced the dark, darkened and threw a glaring light over the vast expanse of angry waters.

The Crescent Oil Refinery of John Schwartz & Co., located close to the northern bank of the creek, in the East End, was in flames. Never before did a fire seem to spread so rapidly, and in less than three minutes from the time the explosion was heard, the vast plant was one sheet of scorching flame.

**PRODIGAL FLOOD.**  
Then it was that pandemonium seemed to break loose and begin to reign supreme. Thousands of people rushed pell-mell through the streets, tumbling and knocking each other down in their mad endeavor to escape from what they imagined was the crack of doom.

The bright light thrown on the surroundings revealed an appalling sight. On the roofs and in the windows of the upper stories of most of the houses in the flooded district appeared men, women and children, dressed mostly in their night robes and all piteously appealing at the height of their voices, which could only now and then be distinguished above the loud rush of the waters and crash of heavy timbers.

Urging to the driftwood, timbers and other debris as they were borne onward down stream, were scores of human beings, their white and terror-stricken faces, desperate struggles and plaintive cries for aid, combining to create a picture never to be forgotten or effaced from the memory of the beholder.

**FATE OF MOTHER AND BABY.**  
A particularly pitiful scene, before the fire swept everything, was witnessed at one point.

A mother, with her babe clasped to her breast with one hand, while with the other she clung to a piece of plank, floated by. The piece of wood drifted with great force directly toward the bunkers, Allegheny water and Pittsburgh Depot, around which the water was rushing furiously at a depth of 5 feet. So swift was the current that the large hole had been washed under the platform of the station. As the mother and babe reached this point the action was so great that it drew them in and they disappeared from view.

**OIL CITY'S SHARE IN DISASTER.**  
Long List of the Dead Who Lie in Improvised Morgues.

OIL CITY, Pa., June 6.—At midnight the following identified bodies of flood and fire victims were in improvised morgues in this city:

WILLIAM ATKIN and his two sons, FRANK and EDWARD.

JOHN BRIDGE and three daughters.

JOHN O'LEARY and mother.

FRANK and WILLIAM HARRIS.

MATTHEW LYONS, wife and two children.

FRANK PLANK.

WILLIAM STEWART.

WILLIAM FROST, LILLER.

JAMES HODGINS.

JAMES HARRIS.

WILLIAM WHITE.

JOHN ROACH.

DANIEL SULLIVAN.

FRANK GOODRICH.

EDWARD KEATING.

CHARLES MILLER.

JOHN STACE.

JOHN RABCO.

THURSTON STEWART.

WILLIAM STEWART.

HARRY HOLMES.

WILLIAM MALONE.

FRANK WATSON.

WILLIAM HARKER.

W. L. DACHENBERG.

FRANK WATSON.

BRENDAN WICK.

EDWARD MILLER and four children.

Mrs. COYLAND and baby.

Mrs. LEVI FITZGER.

About two hundred buildings are burned. The loss on property, oil, etc., is estimated at \$1,500,000.

The disaster came with awful suddenness upon Oil City, while hundreds of people were out watching the rise in the Allegheny River and Oil Creek. The rise of the latter stream was understood to be due to a fatal cloudburst and flood at Titusville, eighteen miles above, but it was not apprehended that serious peril threatened this city from that cause.

**THE HORROR PREPARE PORT.**  
But the peril was there, and shortly after 11:30 it burst forth in a terrible, flame-giving, life-taking explosion.

Few of the spectators who were watching the flood when the explosion occurred and escaped can be said to have a good idea of what happened. All agree that there was a terrific explosion and that the whole air was filled with flames. This was quickly followed by two other explosions.

Men thought that bell had broken loose on earth, and their thought was not a violent one. Three gasoline tanks had exploded almost at the same time. The oil, boiling down the creek, blazed up. The gas in the

air burst into a roaring flame. The water, land and air were all literally ablaze.  
Men, women and children were knocked prostrate by the shock and many never arose. Some of those who did found themselves in a lake of flames. The multitude fled with screams of anguish for the higher ground.

**A RUSH FOR LIFE.**  
In the rush many of the weak were trampled upon and badly injured. Some were hurt by falling; others ran and leaped into the water and were drowned. The flames in the air quickly burned out, but they left huge volumes of black smoke across the face of the heavens, beneath which roared the fierce flames of the burning oil upon the water.

The many submerged houses and shops along the creek bottom were soon in flames, and the silent fire of crackling flames of burning homes. In many of those houses the people were confined. They could not escape for the fire. Within the slight of thousands, who heard their piteous screams, they turned to death or leaped into the river, and there perished by both flood and fire.

Such a combined scene of destruction by two terrible elements was seldom witnessed upon this earth. It is marvellous that out of this valley of death any were saved alive. It is strange that out of this commingling of fire and flood any houses were spared.

**A RESCUE STORY.**  
The story told by Harry McVeagh, a member of a rescuing party which saved a dozen lives, surprised in horror many of those related by persons who worked only in bringing corpses out of ruins.  
He, with Wade Haines, William Conch and Albert Smith, toured the creek after the fire had died at its head of Seal, a street they found eleven persons clinging.

"Their condition was horrible," said McVeagh. "I wish that I could show my eyes and shut out the sight. Their clothing was burned off their bodies, their hair was singed and their eyes even in some cases were burned out, yet some of them I believe will live," and the brave fellow breathed a sigh as he regarded their living as a misfortune to themselves.

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**GAVE HIS LIFE FOR OTHERS.**  
One of the heroes, who gave his life for that of others, was William L. Stewart, of Siversville, a small village about a mile up Oil Creek. When the disaster occurred Stewart ran to his home in Siversville and dragged a boat to the water's edge. He braved the death that moved on the waters, and was one of those who helped to save the west side victims.

For an hour he helped to drag people out of the houses on the bank of Oil Creek, and bore them in his boat to safety. A great wave of naphtha approached over Stewart's head, a house cracked and in an instant he was engulfed in a mass of horror, oil and flame. From below the river stretched out a hundred tongues of fire, and he was caught in the timbers and plaster. Stewart was killed outright.

He died at his post almost in the very act of snatching lives from the raging elements. His body was fearfully battered and burned. He leaves a wife and six children.

**ONE GAVE TIMELY WARNING.**  
John A. Klein, Superintendent of the National Transit Company's shops, was instrumental in saving many lives by a timely warning.

He was near the tunnel on the Lake Shore road when the pungent odor of the benzine borne on the breeze attracted his attention. Knowing that some accident must have happened upstream or that a volume of oil was floating down the creek, he recognized at once the fearful result that would ensue if it should catch fire.

"Put out your fires and run for your lives," he shouted, running with all the speed he could muster from house to house. Many took warning and fled to the shelter of the hills. But he had not gone far before a flash as if from some huge thunderbolt illuminated the valley, and in an instant a wall of flame arose from the creek, enveloping everything within the compass of the rushing waters in its awful grasp.

Across the creek from the main portion of the city not a house is standing between the creek and the hill and not a vestige of fire can be seen except the sea of fire on the dead.

Along the east side from the mouth of Oil Creek, for a distance of three-quarters of a mile, every building except one along the creek has been destroyed.

Most of the houses destroyed were owned by the occupants and were worth from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Over 300 homeless people are being taken care of at the Presbyterian Church in being used as a temporary shelter.

Among the buildings destroyed are the Bellevue Hotel, the Petroleum House, the Oil City barrel factory, George Paul & Son's Furniture Works and the Oil City Lumber Works.

**HOW FIRE FIRST STARTED.**

An Engine's Spark Lighted an Oil Tank Beside the Track.

(BY ASSOCIATED PRESS.)

TITUSVILLE, Pa., June 6.—The farmers living along the Juniata River and Raystown branch have sustained immense loss to growing crops and fencing by the floods of last night.

While driving home from church last night Alfred Smucker and family, of Mill Creek, were caught in the flooded stream, their wagon was overturned and Mary, the five-year-old daughter, was drowned.

At Mill Creek Village people were removed from their houses in boats.

**DISASTROUS FLOOD AT ERIE.**

Thirty Buildings Swept Away, but No Human Lives Lost.

ERIE, Pa., June 6.—Last evening Clark's mill dam at Union City burst and a wall of water swept through the town, carrying thirty houses from their foundations.

Men thought that bell had broken loose on earth, and their thought was not a violent one. Three gasoline tanks had exploded almost at the same time. The oil, boiling down the creek, blazed up. The gas in the

air burst into a roaring flame. The water, land and air were all literally ablaze.

Men, women and children were knocked prostrate by the shock and many never arose. Some of those who did found themselves in a lake of flames. The multitude fled with screams of anguish for the higher ground.

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While many persons were badly hurt, none lost their lives.  
Hundreds of homes and cattle were drowned. The damage will reach not less than \$100,000.

The towns of Titusville, Pittsburgh, Columbus and many other places are under water. At Titusville the operator, J. E. Nead, stood at his post and worked at his instruments with the water three feet deep in the office and the building surrounded by debris and roaring flood.

**SUNOL ESCAPES THE FLOOD.**  
Meadville was inundated, but the Kite Track was Not Reached.  
MEADVILLE, Pa., June 6.—Damage amounting to \$100,000 to \$200,000 was done by flood in this city last night. Mill Creek waters coming out of their banks and inundating the business portion of the town.

The kite track and stables were beyond the reach of the flood, and Sunol and Mr. Bonner's other horses are safe.

**THE RAVAGED VALLEY.**  
It Contained Two Cities, Nine Hamlets and 45,000 People.  
PITTSBURGH, June 6.—Oil Creek, the scene of the great disaster, rises in the northern part of Crawford County and flows in a generally southerly direction to Titusville, and from there almost due south to the Allegheny River at Oil City. Just below Titusville it is joined by East Oil or Pine Creek.

Between Titusville and Oil City there are nine hamlets where oil wells have been sunk which have attained the dignity of post-offices. Altogether these hamlets have a population of about 45,000.

From Titusville toward Oil City, in order, the towns are: Titusville, 8,072; Boughn, about 100; Miller Farm, about 100; Meredith, about 200; Pioneer, about 100; Petroleum Centre, about 200; Columbus, about 300; Kane Farm, about 300; Roseville, about 300; McClintock, about 100; Oil City, 10,032.

The eighteen miles between Titusville and Oil City probably represent a population of from 40,000 to 45,000. Oil City proper lies just as the old city of Pittsburgh lies between the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers. Oil City was incorporated as a borough in 1892 and as a city in 1870. It has thirteen schools of three public schools, six private schools, a manufacturing factory, oil refineries, a lumber mill, a brick factory and other industries.

Titusville is on Oil Creek and on the Allegheny Valley Railroad and the terminus of the Pittsburgh and Allegheny Valley and Oil City and Titusville Railroads. It is nearly ninety miles south of Pittsburgh and twenty-five miles east of Meadville. It is the most populous town in Crawford County. It has a church, a school, a bank, a newspaper, a hotel and a large school, hotels, printing offices, a steam sawmill, large iron works, etc.

As soon as Chairman Murphy was assigned to a room, he was joined and was closed with him for a long time. The delegates in response to an invitation from Chairman Murphy, who had the situation of the day and has had opportunity to study the local situation. He has also had interviews with the delegates from this city and Kings County and all the rural delegates who are on the ground.

It is understood that the Democratic Convention will be held at the Hotel Hamilton, where the delegates from this city and Kings County and all the rural delegates who are on the ground.

It was announced that Chairman Murphy and Mr. Murphy would consult with Chairman Craker. The important part of the action of the convention will be to decide whether or not to hold the convention at the Hotel Hamilton, where the delegates from this city and Kings County and all the rural delegates who are on the ground.

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